1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

behindhand with the tax, at a time when he should have organized, as chief, the village rituals that precede the harvest.

As long as a chief in his capacity as a paid official of the N.A. organizes common labour for road-work—the value of which the Nigerian peasant is soon coming to realize—the capture of a criminal, or certain obvious hygienic practices, he will be backed by public opinion. But when enforcing an unpopular tax, pressing children for the Government schools (which was frequently enough the case a few years ago), or—a case I witnessed myself—sentencing to a fine in accordance with some ambitious by-law a man who had been defecating on the public road, his authority no longer serves the accepted common interests and can no longer reckon with common approval.[1] Here the backing by the Administration must provide the extra power which is to weigh the scales in favour of the chief and to reset the political balance between chief and community. Here and there the Administration even felt compelled to replace a traditional chief, who proved incapable of carrying out the tasks which his position under the N.A. assigned to him, by a more willing or more enlightened man, possibly one who had had the advantage of education and could thus better see the 'white man's' viewpoint.[2] But this solution was not an unqualified success: Government backing was not capable of making up for the loss of the moral unity which supports the traditional chief in the execution of his traditional duties.

The case of the present chief of Jebba Island is an illuminating instance—although here the Administration is only indirectly responsible for the departure from the traditional rules of chieftainship. After the death of the last *Gebba*, who was said to have been a rather inefficient Village Head, a complete outsider was appointed as chief, a stranger who had been living for some time in the late *Gebba*'s house and had been acting for him as semi-official messenger in his dealings with the District Head at Mokwa. It was on the advice of the District Head that he was made the new Village Head. The District Head, himself a stranger who did not know the local situation, preferred to have a man he knew for his subordinate, and a man who had been to the Government School and who was, incidentally, a Mohammedan like himself. Elders and 'king-maker' were not consulted. The village elder who would have been appointed chief if the latter had had their way held at the time the title *Wangua*. He set up something like an independent rule of his own. Except for official business—tax-collection in particular—the people ignored the other, shadow chief, completely. An unhealthy situation arose and was left to exist for two years, during which time there was no real authority in the village, and legal offences and unruly conduct in general were increasing rapidly. In 1935 I had the opportunity of drawing the attention of the Administration to this fact. The man *Wangua* was recognized officially as a 'second-in-command' and prospective

[1] This case happened in a community half Yoruba and half Nupe. The presiding chief was a Yoruba, the victim (who came to me to complain) a Nupe. I could, in fact, hardly imagine a Nupe chief to be sufficiently appreciative of hygienic principles to take such a step.

[2] This happened twice, in Jebba Island and Saipe.